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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMISSION RE-ELECTS VAP AS CHAIR

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Public Service Commission re-elected Fifth District Commissioner Jerry Vap of McCook as chair for 2005 at a meeting January 11 in Lincoln.

Fourth District Commissioner Rod Johnson of Sutton also was re-elected vice-chair.

Vap was appointed to the Public Service Commission in August of 2001 by Governor Mike Johanns and was elected to a full six-year term in the 2004 general election beginning in 2005.

The Commission chair identified several issues that will come before the Commission during the ensuing year. One will be the continued deployment of the wireless E-911 service in two phases throughout the State of Nebraska. “That will be a high priority,” Vap said.

Other issues cited by Vap included:

- The conservation of the numbers for the 308 and 402 area codes that serve all telephone users in the state, thereby keeping the area codes open to the public. Not to do so, Vap said, would mean the expensive and possibly confusing addition of a third area code in Nebraska.
- The deployment of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) has drawn the attention of the Public Service Commission. “We ought to be very careful how it affects the state’s telecommunications system,” Vap said.
- Upgrading and expanding the capabilities of the distance learning system for the state of Nebraska will also be at the forefront of the Commission’s attention, Vap said.
- The Commission will continue to protect producers with its grain warehouse and grain dealer oversight responsibilities.
- The Commission will continue development of the Commission’s natural gas regulatory functions, granted to the Commission with regard to privately owned natural gas companies by the 2002 Legislature. “We’re still learning about the industry and how statewide regulations affect the consumers of the state,” Vap said.

- The Commission will also continue to support the statewide Tele-Health system.

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